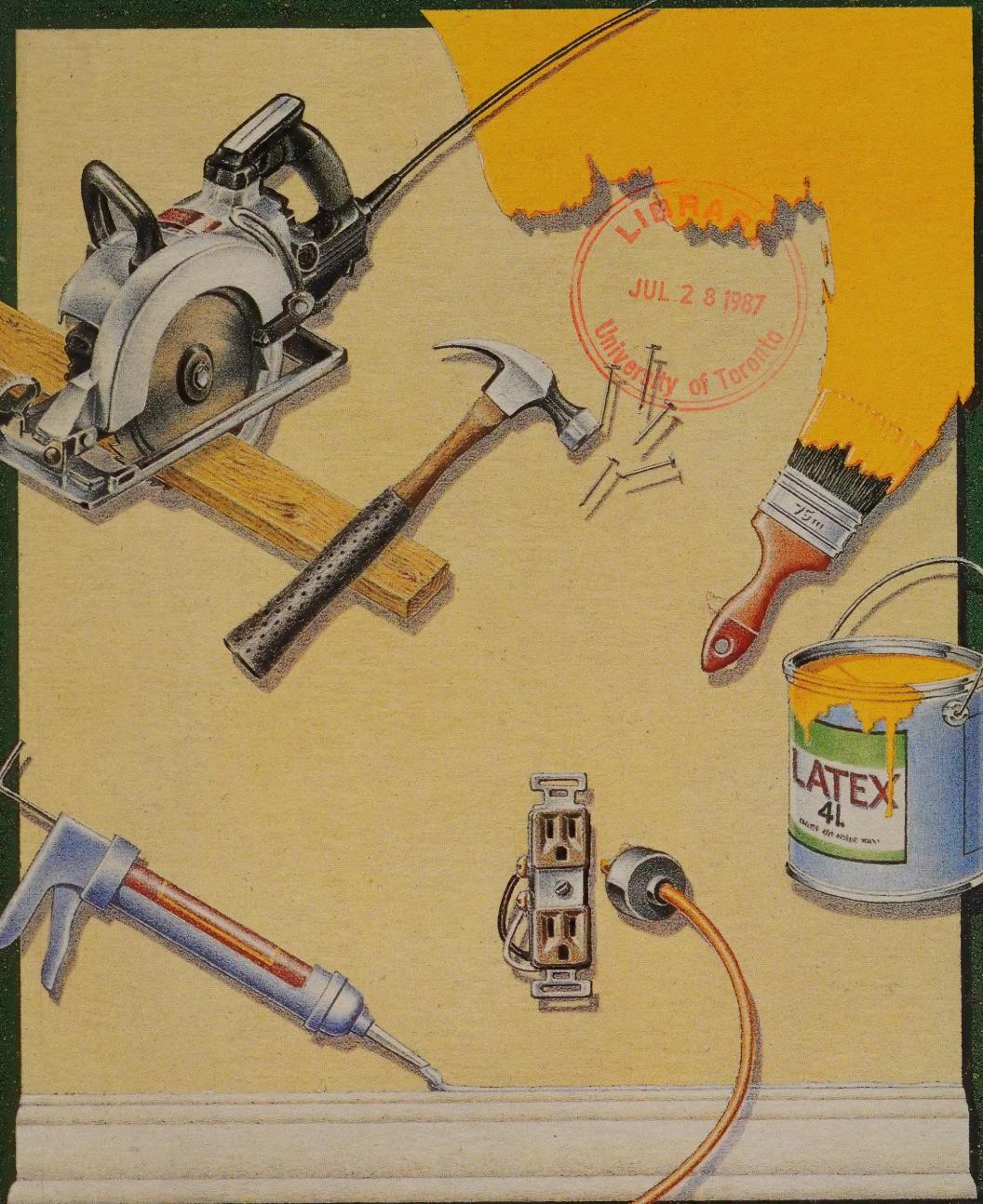


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GET YOUR HOUSE IN SHAPE

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Ministry
of
Housing
Ontario
Hon. Alvin Curling, Minister

G ET YOUR HOUSE IN SHAPE!

Be Prepared

Here are the emergency services commonly used:

plumbing and drains

heating

electrical

window repair

locksmith

gas utility

water utility

electrical utility

police

fire

Fill in the appropriate numbers now before you need them.

Emergency Services

At some point, even the most maintenance-conscious homeowner has to cope with an emergency — a baseball through the front window, a backed-up basement drain, or a downed power line. A little advance preparation and a cool head during the crisis will ease you safely through household emergencies — without unnecessary expense.

Ask your regular trades and service people if they provide emergency service and what their standard fees are. Friends and neighbours may also be able to recommend reliable emergency services. Most emergency services are offered on the basis of a fixed house call fee plus an hourly rate. Call a few listings from the Yellow Pages to compare rates.

When the Emergency Strikes

1. Where personal safety is a factor, as with gas leaks or downed power lines, clear the house or area immediately.
2. Take a few moments to assess the situation; the service company will be relying on your verbal description to decide what materials, tools, and personnel to bring to the house.
3. Be specific about what you want done.
4. Decide in advance who will be doing any necessary clean-up, you or the company.
5. Remember that you will be paying for any off-hours service at a premium rate, so it's best to deal only with the immediate emergency. Keep work to the minimum required for health, safety and building security.

Afterwards

Insist on a legible, itemized bill for the emergency service. This will be useful for your own records and may be needed for insurance purposes.

Look for the underlying cause of the emergency and find out if you need remedial work done to prevent a recurrence. Don't be pressured into contracting for remedial or repair work with the company that provided the emergency service. Now that the crisis is over, you have the time to obtain 3 or more comparative quotes and to follow the regular procedures for choosing a tradesperson.

I NTRODUCTION

Getting your house in shape and keeping it that way is an ongoing process. Many homeowners experience various degrees of difficulty in tackling some of the unexpected repairs or necessary maintenance chores.

This booklet is intended to give you some useful and important hints on what to look for, how to correct various problems, where to get experienced help if you need it, and how to plan your maintenance time most effectively. Our tips try to answer the most common questions and problems faced by the average homeowner.

Our information is in categories:

- general hints
- three charts to help you check your house for potential trouble spots so you can catch them early
- outlining the steps for hiring a tradesperson and a trade-by-trade directory
- a list of other resource information and literature to help you expand your knowledge on specific home maintenance/repair topics

General Points to Keep In Mind

Planning

We recommend beginning with a thorough study of your house. This will allow you to plan ahead. You should itemize all jobs to be done, listing separately:

- minor repairs you can do yourself
- major repairs requiring professional help
- any desired improvements.

Records

You probably already keep records of your taxes, mortgage payments and utility bills. It's also a good idea to keep records of your home maintenance program. These should include:

- a checklist of the minor repairs you plan to do yourself
- your long-term schedule for major repairs and improvements
- equipment service manuals and warranties
- a record of major repairs and improvements — when they were made, the cost, any warranty information and the name and address of the tradesperson who did the work.

If the job is worth doing . . .

Our last piece of general advice is to do the job correctly, using the proper materials, trim, and finishes. Fix any underlying problems before you apply new surface finishings. It is not worth building a new deck over a rotten porch or putting new drywall over old wiring or an uninsulated wall.

G ETTING UNDERWAY

Keeping In Shape

It's easy to let things slip by, easy to think that the problem is unimportant and that you'll get around to fixing it some day. But little problems have a way of getting out of hand. Your best bet is to keep on top of any problem as soon as it appears. Here is a list of warning signs that many people let slip.

- The occasional leak in the roof when it rains. It may seem like a few drips during the occasional storm, but your roof may be getting waterlogged and eventually it can rot.
- The small wobble that slowly gets worse. It may be a porch railing or a door hinge, but tighten the screws or secure it now, before it needs replacing or causes an accident.
- The chimney mortar that erodes until the chimney is in danger of falling.
- The slow disintegration of the chimney interior until the chimney becomes blocked. (Have it repaired immediately.)
- The porch joist that rots away until nothing is left to support the floor.
- The plaster which was not patched up before applying paint or wallpaper.
- The basement leak that occurs each spring.
- The worn treads, fraying carpet and loose banister that can make your stairs a safety hazard.
- The fuse that keeps blowing because you have overloaded the circuit.

Spring Check-Up

Conducting a Spring Check-Up may help you organize your time. The snow and ice are gone and you can prepare your house for the new year. Some of the things to check include:

- cracks or heaving in sidewalks and driveways
- rotten wood, springy floors, or cracked concrete on porches and decks
- insecure posts in fences and gates
- roof leaks and broken flashing
- damage to or blockage of eavestroughs and downspouts
- powdery white patches (efflorescence) or cracking along foundation walls
- peeling or blistering paint
- basement leaks and cracks.

Fall Check-Up

Early fall is a good time to get your house in order for the coming winter. Spend a little time to increase your comfort and reduce your fuel bill. To do a basic fall tune-up you should:

- check caulking along door, window and baseboard trim and in the basement
- check condition of weatherstripping on all windows and doors and make sure all glass panes fit snugly
- check dampers and floor registers of the forced-air heating system
- install a new filter in the forced-air furnace
- have the heating unit serviced and the controls checked
- check condition of chimney and chimney cap
- check operation of dampers for all exhaust vents and fireplaces.

M ECHANICAL SYSTEMS

Plumbing

- supply:** low water pressure can be caused by buildup of mineral deposits from hard water, especially in hot water lines
- check for condensation on basement supply lines
- hot water heater:** deposits can also build up scale on inside of tank, reducing its efficiency
- fixtures:** check faucets, hose outlets & other valves for leaks
- drains:** excessive use of corrosive cleaners can damage pipes

- water softening equipment can gradually unclog the pipes; in severe cases, pipes may have to be replaced
- use insulated pipe wrap on cold water lines to reduce condensation & on hot water lines to conserve energy
- open pressure relief valve to see if it is in operating condition
- drain a pail of water from the tank every 3-4 months to remove accumulated sediment
- most leaks can be fixed with a new washer
- clean out traps at base of fixtures
- have plumber use mechanical "snakes" to clear tree roots & blockages from basement drains
- check with your municipality about emergency drain service

Electrical

- where fuses blow or circuit breakers trip frequently, the circuit is likely overloaded
- check condition of all exposed wiring in garage, basement etc.

- replace switches & receptacles on first sign of malfunction
- have new circuits added and, if necessary, upgrade house service to accommodate additional circuits
- have any damaged sections replaced immediately

Heating and Cooling

- forced air:** check filters monthly for cleaning or replacement
- hot water heating:**
- wood:** prevent or reduce creosote build-up
- chimneys:** check for signs of condensation; stains or debris at clean-out door, efflorescence at chimney top
- boilers and furnaces:** these have a limited service life & eventually need to be replaced

- vacuum the supply & return grills
- arrange for yearly cleaning & tune-up by a service company
- additional work can be done to improve the efficiency of the system
- "bleed" radiators to remove air pockets
- arrange for annual servicing of burner & boiler
- where wood is used on a daily basis, chimney & stovepipe should be cleaned more than once a year depending on creosote build-up
- old chimneys should have liners installed, especially those converted from oil to gas; this is an important safety measure to ensure your chimney doesn't block up
- it's wise to delay the replacement of the heating system and/or the addition of any expensive add-ons until completion of air sealing, insulating & other measures that will affect the size of system required



THE OUTSIDE

Roofing and Flashing

- initial signs of wear on asphalt roofs include cupped, loose, or cracked shingles
- flashing & seals should be tight around all roof penetrations

- replace individual shingles as required
- asphalt roofs require replacement approximately every 15 years
- reseal & replace flashing where required
- a complete roofing job should include any necessary repairs to roof sheathing or rafters as well as new flashing & counterflashing

Eavestrough, Soffit & Fascia

- localized damage on house wall or fascia can indicate failed eavestrough due to broken or rusted sections, loose hangars & connections, or improper slope
- check louvres & vents

- remove leaves & debris from eavestrough and install screens at entrance to downspouts
- patch rusted & broken sections, secure straps, prime & repaint as required
- low-maintenance vinyl & aluminum systems are available as replacements for original eavestroughing
- ensure that the new system doesn't block soffit vents
- clean away debris & ensure that the louvres fit tightly to siding

Brickwork, Stucco & Masonry

- some weathering is to be expected in masonry joints; localized areas of loose or missing mortar can indicate water damage
- efflorescence is caused by moisture migration which brings salts to the surface
- hairline cracks in stucco or localized areas of masonry indicate minor settling
- perimeter foundations should be checked for small straw-sized termite tubes

- clean joints and repoint
- to ensure the durability of brick, experts advise that sandblasting or silicone coatings be avoided
- powdery deposits from efflorescence can be removed with muriatic acid; correct source of moisture in the wall
- clean the crack and repair
- consult an expert about major cracks which may indicate structural problems
- contact municipality immediately about assistance; non-toxic treatments have been developed

Exterior Siding

- joints between walls & trim and between dissimilar materials should be caulked to provide a weather seal
- localized areas of peeling paint signal moisture damage
- aluminum & vinyl siding require little or no maintenance but can still be damaged by impact or weather and repairs are difficult

- recaulk with butyl or rubber caulking where required
- depending on climate, wood siding requires periodic repainting; ensure that the surface is properly prepared before repainting
- remove causes of moisture, replace damaged wood, then sand, prime, and repaint
- new siding should repel wind & rain but allow any moisture in the walls to escape
- residing work presents the opportunity to insulate the house from the exterior with little additional cost

THE OUTSIDE

- exterior trim will require repainting every 6-8 years

Doors & Windows

- check condition of putty
- check condition of glass & weatherstripping
- check storms & screens

- scrap (or sand) and repaint as required
- proper preparation of the surface is necessary for the paint to adhere; where excessive paint build-up has occurred, it will have to be removed before repainting

Grading & Drainage

- ground should slope away from the foundation, driveways, and walks
- downspouts should direct water away from the house

- replace putty around glass as required
- reglaze; replace weatherstripping where required
- use good-quality thermal units for replacement
- insulate & seal space between new window unit & framing
- lubricate sash channels of metal storms with silicone spray
- new storm windows should be vented to the outside

Sidewalks & Driveways

- asphalt:** overall hairline cracks indicate normal wear
- areas of localized cracking & heaving signal water accumulation
- concrete:** see Porches

- clean debris from window wells and storm drains
- where groundwater accumulation is severe, additional drainage tiles, trenches, or sumps may be needed
- reset downspout splashblocks, if necessary
- see sections on Eavestroughs and Basement Damp-proofing

Porches and Entrance Ways

- concrete:** check for cracks & loose or crumbling patches
- check for heaving of slab where it meets house wall
- wood porches & decks:** water, rot & termites can damage floors, supports & trim
- look for worn finish & signs of rot, especially at exposed end-grain & water-catching joints

- spot-patch asphalt with cold mix
- applying sealer to asphalt will prolong life of the surface
- asphalt requires resurfacing every 7-10 years
- improvements to grading & drainage may be required to prevent recurring damage

Fences & Gates

- see wood porches & decks; also check wood posts for rotting at ground level
- metal fences and posts should be checked for rusted areas

- repair minor damage to prevent further deterioration
- keep work area damp to ensure good bond for the patch
- seal crack between slab and house wall to prevent further water penetration and heaving
- repair or replace damaged wood sections
- recoat with penetrating stain, paint or wood preservative as required
- when replacing wood floors on covered porches or adding new decks, do upgrading and repairs to exposed foundation wall
- ventilation in space under porch or deck will help to prevent rot
- in termite areas, avoid wood-soil contact; set posts on concrete

- replace rotted posts with wood that has been pressure-treated to the appropriate standard; in termite areas set wood on concrete
- recoat wood fences with stain or paint as required
- clean to bare metal, reprime and repaint as required



THE INSIDE

BASEMENT

Masonry

- fine cracks in masonry joints indicate normal settling
- groundwater accumulation and frost heaving can cause deep cracks to appear or sections of the concrete to break away (spalling)

Wood

- wood can be damaged by exposure to water, dampness, and soil and by termites
- wet rot:** water damage causes wood to appear charred & split
- dry rot fungus:** affected pieces will have white tissue-like patches on the surface
- wooden structural elements may also be affected by settling of exterior masonry walls or they may have been undersized to begin with or have been weakened by the installation of heating ducts or wiring

Damp-proofing

- moisture in the basement may be caused by condensation from indoor humidity or by moisture movement from the ground through the walls and floor

- patch joints
- remove source of groundwater accumulation from the exterior: see Grading, Eavestrough
- exterior waterproofing may be required where spalling is present; see Damp-proofing
- don't cover masonry walls until any problems are corrected

- replace wood support posts that sit directly on masonry with metal posts
- don't let wood come into direct contact with soil
- replace wood posts that may have been subjected to periodic wetting from basement flooding with metal supports
- replace any damaged wood members
- ventilate unheated basements and crawlspaces during the summer to eliminate dampness
- wrap cold water pipes with insulation and vent dryer to the outside to reduce condensation
- install additional support posts where required
- reinforce affected areas as required
- with older houses that have shifted considerably, the best course is to contain the movement rather than to restore the structure to its original position

MAIN FLOORS

- minor cracks can appear in new houses as the building settles and the wood frame dries
- continuing change in an older home usually signals a more serious structural problem

- wrap cold water pipes with insulation and vent dryer to the outside to reduce condensation
- basement walls & floors can be damp-proofed from the interior if the amount of moisture penetration is minor
- if water enters in measurable amounts, then exterior waterproofing is required
- best method of exterior waterproofing requires exposing the foundation wall; insulate the exterior of basement walls while the foundation is exposed

- minor problems such as cracks in drywall or binding doors can be easily repaired
- if movement continues, i.e. cracks open again and window and door frames shift further, a structural expert may have to be consulted

THE INSIDE

Air Sealing & Weatherstripping

- most homes built before 1980 are not adequately air sealed

- upgrade as required
- some firms provide a complete air sealing service, including before-and-after pressure tests with special equipment

Walls & Ceilings

- fine hairline cracks in plaster may be caused by settling or by variations in temperature and humidity
- cracks that are accompanied with peeling paint indicate moisture damage

- most painted & paper surfaces are washable; regular cleaning will prolong the lifetime of the finish
- complete repainting & papering job should include minor repairs to plaster and proper preparation of the surface
- interior air sealing should be done before repainting
- investigate and eliminate the source of moisture damage before redecorating

Floors

- hardwood:** should have uniform colour & tight joints
- normal wear & drying of the house will remove the finish & expose joints
- ceramic tile:** grout that is dark or broken indicates failure of the joint

- rewaxing is required once or twice a year; for a urethane finish, a new coating is required periodically
- spot repairs to the finish can be done by hand
- complete refinishing & sealing of worn floors will prolong their usable life
- clean, fill, and seal failed joints before they open
- ensure that proper subflooring is installed with any new finish

Doors and Windows

- doors can bind due to faulty or loose hinges, settling of the frame or warping caused by humidity
- check doors & windows for ease of operation
- check latches and locks
- check condition of sashes & sills; condensation on windows can cause deterioration of the paint and rotting of the wood

- doors can be rehung on their hinges using longer screws, fastened into the stud if necessary
- where the frame has shifted, doors can be sanded or planed
- warped doors can be removed and straightened or replaced
- vacuum the tracks of sliding doors regularly and oil them
- vacuum window sash channels; if they bind, spray with silicone
- lubricate door locks with graphite; free frozen window locks with penetrating oil
- sand wood smooth & repaint where required

ATTIC

- check roof rafters, sheathing and ceiling joists for signs of moisture damage
- check condition of insulation and air/vapour barrier

- ensure that attic ventilation is adequate
- stains around roof penetrations indicate leaks at the flashing
- ensure that bathroom vents do not exhaust into the attic
- keep soffit & gable vents clear of obstructions
- soggy cellulose insulation should be removed

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WHO IS OUT THERE?

How To Choose A Tradesperson

You can probably do many home maintenance jobs yourself, or else you can hire a general handyperson. Other jobs will require a specialty tradesperson. Finding the right tradespeople is important, especially since you will probably call on some of them again. You should first write down a detailed description of the exact job to be done. It should include the particular type and grade of the materials needed, as well as their size and style and even a brand name if there's one you prefer. This detailed work description forms a key part of any contract. The other key element of a contract covers responsibilities, schedules and payments; an example is included on page 13.

The best source of names is people you know, friends and neighbours who have had similar work done. You can look at the quality of the finished job and ask if they would recommend the contractor. Real estate agents, architects, and the manager of the local hardware or paint store may also be able to recommend tradespeople. Finally, you can consult the Yellow Pages. The local licensing body of each trade will be able to tell you if a particular contractor is licensed and the records of your nearest Better Business Bureau will indicate whether any complaints have been filed against that person's name.

Ask the tradespeople to come by your house to look at the job. If they are too busy or just don't turn up, then strike them from your list. Provide each tradesperson you interview with a copy of the job description and ask for a written quote, which should specify the price and timing of the work.

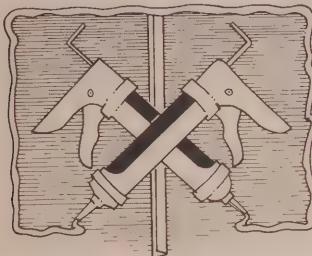
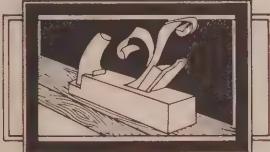
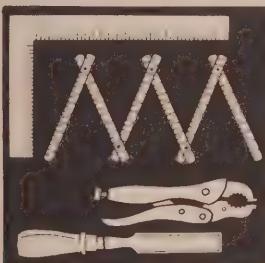
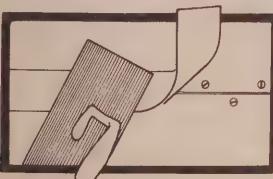
If you are unfamiliar with the contractors or their work, you should ask:

- how long they have been in business
- what experience they have in your type of work
- for references from previous clients.

When you have received written quotations (try to get at least 3), choose your contractor. Make your choice not only on the basis of price, but also consider experience, reliability and previous work. Remember, the lowest quote is not always the best.

Cautionary Notes

- Beware of tradespeople who require a large advance deposit for materials.
- Don't be pressured by door-to-door salespeople offering a special deal because they "happen to be in the neighbourhood". If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Never be pressured into signing a "standard" contract immediately. It's best not to sign anything without taking 24 hours to think it over.

air sealing contractors**cabinet makers****carpenter/general contractor/handyperson****drywall contractors**

The following directory lists many of the trades involved in home maintenance and improvement. We have already discussed some of the general principles which you should follow in choosing and hiring a tradesperson. With each trade, there are also specific issues to be considered.

- involved in caulking and weatherstripping the shell of your house to reduce drafts and heat loss due to air leakage
- all air sealing should be performed on the interior of the house; durable caulk and weatherstripping materials will ensure a long-lasting job
- the use of special equipment (a door fan) can assist in the location of leaks and provide a before-and-after measurement of house leakage

- specialty woodworking projects — shelving units, cabinetry, furniture design and construction
- most work is performed in the shop; it's worth going by their place of business to look at types of machinery, work in progress, etc.
- question the amount of solid wood vs. veneer to be used, type of hardware, finishing materials, etc.

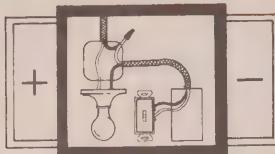
- this will likely be the tradesperson you use the most, so take the time to find someone with proven skills and good references
- carpentry jobs around the home include installing cabinets, repairing and installing doors and windows, repairing or building porches, fences or decks, repairing stairs and railings, siding and trim
- experienced general carpenters are also capable of many small straightforward jobs that fall within the bounds of other trades. They can fill the middle ground between maintenance jobs you can do yourself and larger projects for which you need a specialist. Related work includes minor repairs to masonry, concrete and asphalt, eaves-troughs, soffit, fascia, roofing and flashing, exterior painting, interior painting and paperhanging, installing drywall, vinyl tile or linoleum, weatherstripping and insulation.

- repair and/or installation, taping, and finishing of drywall
- recommended installation procedures include: solid backing at all joints, use of drywall screws rather than nails, and 3 coats of plaster feathered away from joints
- ask about dust control and clean-up



WHO IS OUT THERE?

electrician



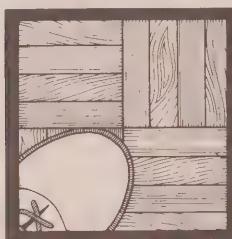
- installation and repair of all electrical wiring and circuitry in house — lighting, electric heating, fire alarms, etc.
- ensure that the contractor is providing proper advice on service panel upgrading; for example, not all houses need 200 amp service
- electrician should have journeyman's or master's Certificate of Qualification as issued by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities

exterminators



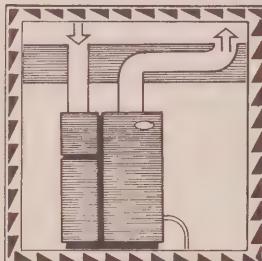
- elimination of termites, cockroaches, and other house insects; some exterminators will also remove squirrels, raccoons, bats, and other small animals
- ensure that the products used will not have a harmful effect on your family and pets
- exterminator's equipment should be capable of reaching inaccessible areas of house
- exterminators should have a minimum Structural Class #3 licence from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment

flooring contractors



- most contractors are linked with a retail outlet and most can install both carpet and vinyl; specialty tradespeople are required for ceramic tile and hardwood flooring
- different flooring materials will demand different underlay materials — foam underlay for carpets, good one-side plywood or underlay for vinyl flooring
- refinishing hardwood flooring should include replacing badly worn boards, resetting nails, and sealing open joints; ask about finishing — number of coats, type of materials, etc.
- ceramic tiles can be set in adhesive (thin set), but a cement mortar (thick set) is more durable; to reduce the risk of cracks, the subfloor should be properly installed

heating and air conditioning



- can be obtained and serviced in a number of ways: through independent contractors, authorized dealers of particular equipment, large department stores and, in some cases, the local utility
- contractor should be able to calculate heating loads, then recommend, install and service appropriate equipment
- contracts should specify the room temperature which the equipment must be capable of maintaining on the coldest day
- look for contractor's registration with the Fuel Safety Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations (telephone Toronto 239-2985) and affiliation with the Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Institute (HRAI) (telephone Toronto 239-8191)

- before quoting, the contractor should inspect the area for problems that might affect the insulation work
- before hiring a contractor, get names of the previous year's customers and call them to check on work quality and any subsequent problems

insulation contractors



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WHO IS OUT THERE?

masonry contractors



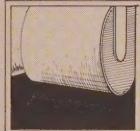
- All types of brick, blockwork, concrete and stucco repairs and new installations; also foundation work, chimney repairs, and repointing of bricks
- for repairs and replacement, ask how the work will be made to match existing masonry — type of pointing, pattern of stucco or plaster, colour of bricks
- ensure that the causes of spalling bricks, efflorescence, and other types of deterioration are treated; for example, a damaged chimney may require a liner

painters and paperhanglers



- preparation is the basis of a high-quality finished job
- specify how the surface should be prepared and the number of coats to be applied; the materials to be used should be identified by manufacturer, type, brand name and colour
- some oil-based paints used for exterior work form a film of chalk-like dust on the surface; this chalking is an advantage on white trim or siding, especially in urban areas, as it allows the soiled outer layer to wash away
- standard guarantee for exterior work is 5 years

pavers/driveway contractors



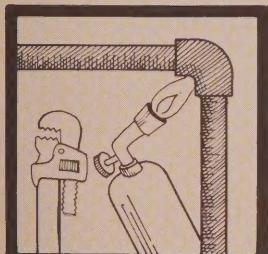
- will install new driveways and resurface or seal existing work
- for resurfacing, soft spongy areas should be removed to provide a firm base and rocks and weeds should be removed; the new surface should be at least 25 mm thick
- driveways should be sealed with either a good-quality bituminous, water-emulsion type of sealer or with a coal tar sealer

plasterers



- experienced plasterers can replicate broken moldings and cornices, patch damaged walls, and replaster large areas
- repairs should include removal of old plaster down to a firm base and application of scratch coat, top coat, and thin finish coat
- for large areas where plaster is loose and in poor condition, alternative treatments are: mechanically fastening the damaged plaster to lath and applying a new top coat, or putting up new drywall

plumbers

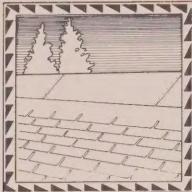


- most plumbers will provide emergency service for broken pipes, clogged drains, and failing pumps
- many plumbers also service or install hydronic heating systems and do complete bathroom remodelling
- in rural areas, water supply and septic systems can be installed without the assistance of a plumber
- plumber should have journeyman's or master's Certificate of Qualification as issued by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities

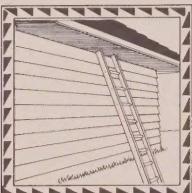
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WHO IS OUT THERE?

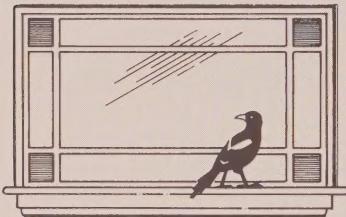
roofers



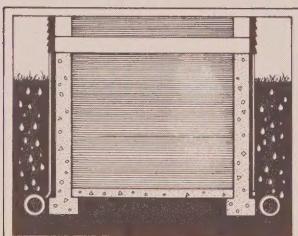
siding



window contractors



waterproofers



- experienced roofers will have a workshop and a machine to custom bend flashing
- many roofers also do chimney repairs and work on eaves-troughing
- new flashing around all roof penetrations should be part of a reroofing job, as should edging, flashing and counterflashing at junction of chimney and where walls meet flat roofs
- warranty on the job should meet or exceed the materials' warranty

- for wood siding see carpentry; for stucco, see masonry
- aluminum and vinyl siding are available from dealers on a supply-and-install basis; they come in varying widths to simulate clapboard
- ask about upgrading insulation levels at the same time as re-siding
- complete re-siding consists of properly sized siding sheets, corner strips and window trim to suit the age and style of the house; should also include new soffit and fascia
- ask about warranties

- replacement aluminum and wood windows are available on a supply-and-install basis; custom wood windows could also be installed by a carpenter
- look for good-quality seals and weatherstripping on operable sections of the window and at least a 12mm gap between panes
- proper installation includes insulating the gap between window frame and rough wall opening; this area should also be air sealed on the interior
- don't install tightly-fitting storm windows on the outside of old windows; this often causes condensation on the inside of the storm, which can lead to moisture accumulation and rotting of the outside sill

- basement waterproofing can be done by masonry contractors or by specialized waterproofing firms
- small isolated leaks and slow seepage may be corrected from the inside using hydraulic cement or water-resistant paint
- basements with major leaks must be repaired and insulated from the outside after the foundation wall is exposed; methods include coating with asphalt or covering with polyethylene sheeting; perimeter drain tile should also be installed

SAMPLE CONTRACT

Between the owner

Name _____

Address _____

And the contractor

Name _____

Address _____

Subject property

Address _____

THE CONTRACTOR SHALL:

- 1) Furnish all labour, materials, supervision, and services to carry out the work detailed in the attached plans and specifications (to be initialled by the contractor and the owner) at the above address.
- 2) Maintain full public liability and property damage insurance covering the above work.
- 3) Obtain and pay for all necessary building permits, licences, and certificates demanded by the municipal or provincial regulatory authority and give copies to the owner before work is started.
- 4) Maintain Workers' Compensation coverage on all employees as required by provincial law, and assure that all subcontractors maintain such coverage on their employees.
- 5) Acknowledge the right of the owner to retain a contractors' lien holdback as specified by provincial law.
- 6) Do all work to the requirements of the applicable building codes or Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) standards.
- 7) Be responsible for the work carried out under this contract by any subcontractors he may employ.
- 8) Agree to start the work within _____ days of the signing of this contract, and to complete it not later than _____ days after the work has started.
- 9) Remove all construction debris from the property upon completion of the work.
- 10) Warrant the work and materials for a period of one year from date of completion, and during this time repair any defects immediately upon receiving written notice from the owner. This warranty does not replace the following manufacturers' warranties on materials and equipment (details to be included or attached).

THE OWNER SHALL:

- 11) Be responsible for assuring that the property meets municipal zoning bylaws and, if necessary, that special permission has been obtained from the appropriate authorities for the work covered in this contract.
- 12) Provide the space and freedom of movement on the property for the contractor's workers to do their jobs.
- 13) Pay the sum of _____ to the contractor, subject to clause 5 above, as follows:
(Establish your own payment schedule with the contractor, taking into account downpayments, interim payments and the final payment.)

Signed _____ Contractor _____ Owner _____

Date _____
(Both of you must keep a signed original.)

This is an example of a typical contract for home improvement work, indicating the issues such a contract should address. It should not be construed as an official legal document. This contract is based on **How to Hire a Contractor**, published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

